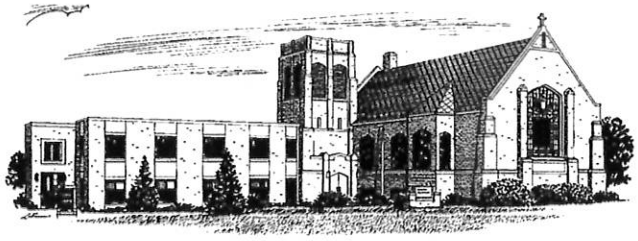


The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Senior Choir Director,
Bell Choir Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Margaret Froehlich, Administrative Assistant
Megan Savage Financial Secretary
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Typical Sunday Schedule at Saron:
During the School Year:
8:30 & 11:00 A.M. Worship
Childcare provided
9:40 Learning for Ages 2 – Adult

Summers (thru Labor Day weekend):
9:30 Holy Communion
Childcare provided
No Learning Hour

During the present Pandemic:
11:00 a.m. via Zoom

All are welcome!

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

Saron's Mission:
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!

SARON NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

August 2020

Do you remember, as a child, waiting for that special event – perhaps a birthday or a visit from someone special? It seemed like the day would never come. Maybe, in the meantime, a parent or a friend kept you occupied so that the time would seemingly go by more quickly.

We are living in a time of waiting – waiting for gatherings with friends, in-person worship, the pandemic to be over. We are tired of hearing about the "new normal." Even so, we keep busy – not busy for busy sake, but occupied with those things that matter – keeping up with friends and family, feeding the hungry, working for justice. And yes, sometimes we do those things in new forms.

Part of the waiting for Saron's congregational council is discernment. At our August 17 meeting we will again visit a date for re-opening for in-person worship. Our hope is for September 13. In the meantime, we are making sure we are ready, supplies and helpers in hand, so that if the Covid-19 situation warrants our re-opening, we can. In the meantime, also, we continue to stay in touch with one another in whatever way we can, feed the hungry, and work for justice. As we said as all of this began, church has not been canceled; it is just looking differently these days. And once again, we are reminded that doing things differently can be good, very good. It gives us opportunity to observe and experience what God is doing, if we have eyes to see.

So...stay safe and stay healthy my friends. God is with us in the wait and in the meantime.

Pastor Joan

NOTE: A letter to the congregation (and friends of Saron) regarding re-opening, as well as guidelines that Saron has put into place, can be found on the home page of Saron's website. www.saronlutheran.org

Caring and Sharing

In Our Prayers –

Arla Huelsberg and Richard Schalon are at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center, St. Joseph; **Lyra Krall** at her daughter's; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace.

Office Hours at Saron (these hours will vary during Covid-19)
Margaret (secretary): Mon-Tues, 9 AM - 1 PM
Weds of Newsletter Week, 9 AM - 1 PM
Volunteers: Weds, 9:15 AM - 11 AM (approximately)
Financial Secretary: Megan Savage; Tues & Thurs 5:30 PM
financial@saronlutheran.org
Call the office for more information.
When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (983.1273) or contacting the president of the congregation.
Note: E-mails meant for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org. E-mails to Margaret and the church office should be addressed to info@saronlutheran.org.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members in August 2020.

Aug. 1 – Bradley Gorman
2 - Joseph Ulrey
3 - Tim Standen
Ted Dosch
4 – Linda Huff
5 - Brian Hohman
Emma Dipert
7 - Ed Standen
9 - Benjamin Baumgartner
Mary Smart
14 - Maggie Hammer
15 –David Bailey
16 - Tedd Gorman
20 – Diana Dubman
22 - Irma Gorman
23 – Andrew Huff
24 – Rebecca (Fortenbacher) Sherry
Paula Risetter
27 - Pamela Olson
Elizabeth Schmuhl
28 – Megan Stacey

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members In August 2020.

Aug. 1 – Matthew and Laurel Gacek
3 - David and Dana Riley
6 - Jerry and Ruth Stelling
7 – Brad and Marilyn Frey
Victor and Nicole Coar
8 - Erik and Brittany (Ondraka) Hansen
14 - Donald and Eloise Moely
15 – John and T. J. Koehler
20 – David and Shelly Stankiewicz

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round" If there is anyone who has been omitted, or, if the dates are incorrect from the birthday and anniversary list, please call the church office at 983- 1273. Thank you.

WITH SYMPATHY

We offer our sympathy to the family of Virginia Anserello upon her death June 30, 2020. We keep her son and his wife, Terry and Kathi Anserello, and the entire family in prayer. A graveside service was held for Virginia in Indiana.

We extend our sympathy to Mary Alice and Ed Brunner upon the death of Ed's father, Jim, on June 23 at the age of 95.

Also, to David Young and family upon the death of his grandmother, Dorothy Bryan on July 24.

God is our refuge and strength. Psalm 46:1a

Congratulations

We congratulate Pastor Joan and Jim upon the birth of their granddaughter, Joni Theodora, daughter of Gretchen and JJ Skudlarczyk. Joni was born on July 10.

Also, to Marcus Roll and Beth Gray-Roll upon the birth of their sons, Emmett and Thatcher on July 11.

THANK YOU

Thank you for the card and cross necklace. It was a really nice gift, and a nice reminder of my church and faith. Thank you, Pastor, for driving out to my home to drop it off. Thank you all again, and God bless.

Nolan Becker

PRAYER GROUP

Join us on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. for a time of quiet reflection and prayer. Presently, this happens in individual homes; please email any requests to oleson@saronlutheran.org. Thank you.

We hope everyone has enjoyed the hot July days! It's nice every few years to have a steamy summer in Michigan so we can newly appreciate the change of seasons. Contrast can be a good thing, similar to the phrase *absence makes the heart grow fonder*. Being apart right now is hard on all of us but once we are able to gather again, we will appreciate each other's smiling eyes so much more than we ever did before. While we anticipate that happy day, we will also continue with building maintenance throughout the second half of summer with additional sanctuary roof and bell tower repairs and the attic fan repairs.

As of the end of June 2020, we had collected $261,741 towards our 3 year pledge total of $371,165. That means at the halfway point in the timeline, we have collected approximately 70% of the pledged amount. There are larger projects that require us to build up our savings and the quicker we hit our pledge total, the earlier we can move forward. We appreciate your faithful giving! Let's keep up the momentum!

Worship

THERE WILL BE NO WORSHIP OR PICNIC AT TISCORNIA PARK THIS LABOR DAY WEEKEND, DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND THE INABILITY TO PHYSICALLY DISTANCE AT THE PAVILION.

FACEBOOK

We love to share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

Sunday Aug. 2 –
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 55:1-5
Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

Sunday Aug. 9–
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
1 Kings 19:9-18
Psalm 85:8-13 (8)
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

Sunday Aug. 16 –
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
Psalm 67
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15:10-28

Sunday Aug. 23 –
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
1 Kings 3:5-12
Psalm 119:129-136
Romans 8:26-39
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Sunday Aug. 30 –
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 15:15-21
Psalm 26:1-8
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28

Nursery News

Watch for more nursery news once we are back to in-person worship. For more information, contact Marilyn Lucy, Krin Jurgensen, or Pastor Oleson.

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2020 flower calendar is posted. Cost: $25.00/vase. This is an opportunity for you to give flowers in honor or memory of someone. The church orders the flowers (unless you indicate otherwise) and you can take the flowers home after 2nd service.

We will resume the ordering of flowers when we are back to in-person worship.

HOW CAN I HELP?

Some of you have asked how you can help during this time of Covid-19. Here are some thoughts.

Make contact with friends and acquaintances, especially those who may be feeling isolated. This is a great time to use your church directory as your guide.

You may also want to consider the following, some local and some global.

From our presiding bishop
https://community.elca.org/emailviewonwebpage.aspx?erid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d&trid=cc068be7-4986-42d9-880d-0aa1bc3c338d

Lutheran Disaster Response
https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/Coronavirus
Lutheran World Relief
https://lwr.org/

Mid-Michigan Flooding

Using funds from the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Disaster Relief Fund, the Synod has supplied food, water, cleaning supplies, and baby care supplies to shelters and sites in Gladwin and Midland counties. The Synod has also joined Michigan Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster as the ELCA is a member of the national organization to help assist those affected.

Much of the initial cleanup has finished and Pastor David Sprang is now talking with rostered ministers, county officials, and other church disaster organizations to see what role the Synod and Lutheran Disaster Response will play in the long term recovery plan for Mid- Michigan. Thank you to all who have donated and helped support our work in helping those affected by the flooding. We are continuing to collect funds for recovery efforts through the North/West Lower Michigan Synod Disaster Relief Fund. In addition, Thrivent is offering a matching gift program that will assist Mid-Michigan and the Midland/Gladwin Community Foundation is also collecting gifts.

Youth

Are you in grades 6-12? Please join us for youth group activities! For more info, contact Scott at *scottgaspari@outlook.com or (Cell) 847-373-8825.*

LEARNING

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study

We are going to have a new series of studies from now to Labor Day. Each Tuesday, we will watch a video by Friar Casey. These videos each run from 7 minutes to 12 or so minutes and each is on a different subject. We will discuss the subject of the video and how the subject of the video fits with the bible.

Saron Men's Tuesday Bible Study is continuing with the use of Zoom and starts at 6:00pm. Each week, Bob Kynast will send out an "invitation" with the link to the Study and the lessons that will be studied.

For more information call Bob Kynast at 269-921-2786 or bobkynast@gmail.com or Don Hafer at 269-985-3637 or hafer.don@gmail.com. All men are invited to join us. As the Bible says "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

Men's monthly Bible Devotions and Breakfast

Saron Men's Monthly Devotion is this Saturday, August 1st, at 9:00 am on Zoom. The theme is "A Light in the Dark," John 1:1-5. Please contact Dennis at (269) 921-4021 or dennis.lundgren@me.com for Zoom info.

THURSDAY MORNING STUDY

We continue our studies on Thursdays at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom. We will be studying the coming Sunday's Gospel lesson. This Summer we are studying the African Bible study method. **Please let Pastor know** of your intention so you receive the sign-in information.

EPHESUS STUDY GROUP

For more information contact Mary Kynast at mfkynast@gmail.com or cell (269) 921-3816.

1ST SUNDAY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

We are taking a break for the summer and will resume again in the Fall. Hopefully gathered in person!

Here are the books we have chosen for 2020-2021. October 4, 2020, "The Wife" by Meg Wolitzer; November 1, 2020, "Educated" by Tara Westover; December 6, 2020, "The Guest Book" by Sarah Blake. February 14, 2021 we will discuss two related books; "The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek" by Kim Richardson and "The Giver of Stars" by Jojo Moyes; March 7, 2021, "When All is Said and Done" by Anne Griffin;
April 4, 2021, "Waking Up White" by Debby Irving; and May 2, 2021, "The Dutch House" by Ann Patchett.
If you plan to purchase a copy of any of these books, we have the perfect resource right here in St. Joe. Please consider using "Forever Books" on State Street. Visit their website, https://www.foreverbooks.net/erbooks@att.net or phone (269-982-1110). Here's to a summer of good reading.

"Reading gives us some place to go when we have to stay where we are." (Mason Cooley)

Women of the ELCA.

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will not meet during August. A September meeting will, hopefully, take place.

Hospitality

Watch for more news as we get closer to getting back together in person.

Outreach

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

On June 25th, with a lot of sanitizing, Deb Standen, & Dave & Kathie Bradley packed 120 sack lunches. To keep everyone healthy the lunch, water & a warm greeting are not served inside the but are given to the clients outside the soup kitchen. This has become the new "norm" so if you haven't been called in a while to serve this is the reason! During this pandemic it is even more important to continue Saron's mission of *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, & prayers.

After the church building opens **large cans of fruit will be needed at the Soup Kitchen** & can be dropped off anytime at the church. Any questions or to volunteer or provide cookies at a later date please contact Kathie Bradley at 269-427-7083.

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

A task force at Saron has been looking at issues of welcome and inclusivity and how to best live into our mission of "joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!"
As noted, the task force is working toward the possibility of Saron becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation, that is a congregation intentional in its welcome of those in the LGBTQIA+ community.
Available at Saron's kiosk are several resources that can help individuals further explore various topics and aid in our conversations and welcoming. Serving on the task force are Kati and Nick Hooper, Laurel Gacek, Laura Hicks, Darlene Kiessel and Pastor. Contact any of these folks if you would like to know more.

Support

A Special Message for Travelers and Those Who Prefer Electronic Giving

Saron offers the option to give electronically for your convenience. Please contact the church office if you have any questions or to enroll. Thanks.

Tax Incentives during the Covid-19 Pandemic

"Above-the-line" tax deduction for charitable contributions

The federal government recently passed legislation to provide financial relief to families as a result of Covid-19. As part of the CARES Act, for the purpose of increasing the work of charitable organizations, individual taxpayers will receive new tax incentives for making charitable donations. The provision encourages individuals to contribute to religious, charitable, and educational organizations by creating a new "above-the-line" deduction (i.e. for taxpayers who take the standard deduction). This deduction permits deduction of up to $300 of annual monetary contributions. This is applicable for tax years beginning after 2019, and does not sunset after 2020. A related provision increases the limitations on deductions for charitable contributions by individuals who do itemize. For those individuals, the 50% of adjusted gross income limitation is suspended for cash contributions made in 2020.

IRA Distributions

For members over 72 years old drawing income from an IRA, the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) is waived for 2020, thereby reducing your tax burden. Effective January 1, 2020, the CARES Act waived RMDs for defined contribution 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, governmental 457(b) plans, and IRAs for calendar year 2020. The waiver applies to RMDs to be made in 2020 and to 2019 RMDs that were due by April 1, 2020 (if not already made in 2019). The good news is that Qualified Charitable Distributions can still be made directly from an IRA account to the church that will both benefit our ministry and reduce the member's taxable income.

As always, members are advised to check with their tax advisor for the latest information and interpretations before filing.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, e-mail Matt Bradley to receive the account number for which the shares will be transferred to. Once the transaction has been completed, e-mail Matt Bradley the name of the stock, the number of shares, and the date of the transfer. This allows the transaction to be completed and ensures it is included on your giving statement. Thanks! Matt Bradley

Interfaith Action

SW Michigan Peace & Justice Collaborative

Interfaith Action, ALPACT, and the Dignity of All working group would like to invite you into conversation around the Netflix documentary " ***13th***", engaging in one piece of the important work of racial and social justice.

View the documentary ***13th*** (available free on YouTube and through Netflix) and then sign-up for one of the film discussions sessions – either August 3rd or August 4th at 7pm.

Sign-up HERE **and login information will be sent to you ASAP!**

More information on Interfaith Action's Facebook

Council News

Saron's Council Members – 2020

Karen Johnson (269-983-2800 – President
Krin Jurgensen (269-369-4493 – Vice President
Joe Ulrey (313-718-2563) – Treasurer
Scott Kohs (269-967-4017) – Secretary
+++
Krin Jurgensen (269-369-4493 – Worship
Brad Frey (921-8618) – Facilities
Molly Becker – Youth
Don Hafer (269-470-2255) – Support
Matt Bradley (419-306-5780) - Support
Jim Manore (269-983-5915) – Hospitality
Deanna Deaton (429-9086) - Hospitality
Kristen Harper (277-9277) – Learning, Youth
Karen Johnson (269-983-2800) – Outreach
Scott Kohs(269-967-4017) - Outreach
Joan Oleson (983-1273) office;
(983-2475) home – Pastor

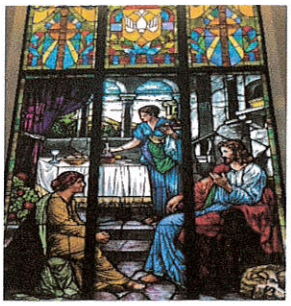
August 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:00 a.m. Men's Bible Devotion via Zoom
2 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**3** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes)	**4** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**5** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom	**6** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**7**	**8**
9 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**10** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 6:00 p.m. Support Comm. Via Zoom	**11** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**12** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom	**13** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**14**	**15**
16 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**17** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) 7:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting Via Zoom Newsletter articles due Pastor Joan on vacation----------	**18** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom ----------	**19** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom ----------	**20** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom 9:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen ----------	**21** ----------	**22** ----------
23 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom ----------	**24** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes) Pastor returns from vacation	**25** 6:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study. Via Zoom	**26** 11:00a.m. Virtual Coffee via Zoom	**27** 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Via Zoom	**28**	**29**
30 Worship at 11:00 a.m. Via Zoom	**31** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Time (in homes)					

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



August 2020
We're on Facebook! Like us at
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

We are currently holding our worship services via ZOOM at 11 a.m. each week. Please email the church office if you need more information. Also, know that we will update you, to the best of our ability, with news as to any changes. We are watching guidelines closely and seek to do our part in keeping everyone safe and healthy. Be well!